



**USAID | MACEDONIA**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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## PRESS RELEASE

### Fourth Annual Holiday Craft Bazaar, A Skopje Highlight, To Be Held December 8-11 at Chifte Amam Gallery

#### **Aid to Artisans, Community Development and Culture Project, and Macedonian Artisan Trade Association Organize Popular Sales Event**

Handmade gift items for the upcoming holidays, produced by more than 70 Macedonian artisan groups and companies, will be on sale between December 8 and 11 during the Fourth Annual Holiday Craft Bazaar at the Chifte Amam gallery in the Old Bazaar in Skopje. Sale hours will be Thursday 14:00-21:00, Friday and Saturday 10:00-20:00, and Sunday 10:00-17:00. This event brings unique Macedonian products to a wide audience, and generates income for artisan entrepreneurs.

The event will be officially opened on Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, at 19:00 by Mrs. Norunn Wibye, wife of the Norwegian Ambassador and Chairperson of the Aid to Artisans Steering Committee.

The event is organized by Aid to Artisans, the Project Coordination Unit (PCU)'s Community Development and Culture Project, and local non-profit organization Macedonian Artisan Trade Association (MATA). Additional support is provided by the Ministry of Economy and the City of Skopje. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has fully supported Aid to Artisans for the last three years and was previously the major sponsor of this event.

Groups representing different musical traditions of Macedonia will perform throughout the bazaar weekend, co-organized by the Directorate of Culture and Arts.

"The annual Holiday Craft Bazaar demonstrates the cultural richness of the handmade sector in Macedonia with a range of great new products," says Norunn Wibye. "There is growing demand for Macedonian-made products. Every year this event draws thousands of people, and the selection process for participation is increasingly competitive. I would like to call on new sponsors to support this landmark event in Skopje, as it makes an essential contribution to the revitalization of the Old Bazaar and Macedonia's small business economy".

"We hope this event will continue on through the years under the guidance of MATA, a local organization that will build upon ATA's craft sector initiative in Macedonia. They have the know-how to make it happen with support from the government, new partners like PCU, and increased investment from artisans themselves," according to Alfreda Brewer, ATA Steering Committee Chairperson and Deputy Mission Director of USAID in Macedonia.

Visitors to the craft festival at the historic Turkish baths will find traditional and contemporary Macedonian handmade items including ceramics, jewelry, mosaics, handcrafted paper, bedroom and table linens, copper goods, icons, glasswork, gift cards, sheepskin, homemade preserves, personal fashion accessories, wooden products, wrought iron, wool carpets, and much more. Shoppers will also find an array of Macedonian food and drink to warm them and local musicians will add to the festive atmosphere.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

"MADE in Macedonia" is a four-year project, ending in December 2005, for the development of the Macedonian handcraft industry. The project is managed by the U.S. NGO Aid to Artisans and supported by the United States Government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Aid to Artisans works with Macedonian artisans to tailor their handcraft production to the demands of local and export markets. For more information please visit [www.aidtoartisans.org](http://www.aidtoartisans.org).

The American people, through USAID, have invested more than \$400 million in Macedonia since 1993. More than 30 projects worth \$35 million a year are currently being implemented. These projects are designed to support Macedonia's transition to a free market-based, multi-ethnic democracy. They include initiatives to accelerate economic growth, develop democratic institutions, and educate citizens for a modern economy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit [www.USAID.org.mk](http://www.USAID.org.mk).

The Project Coordination Unit (PCU) "Community Development and Culture Project" is a project of the Ministry of Culture, funded and supported by the Government of Republic of Macedonia, the World Bank and the Government of the Kingdom of Netherlands.

MATA - The Macedonian Artisan Trade Association is a non-profit, non-governmental organization established by five members of the local staff of Aid to Artisans, Inc. (ATA) and registered in Macedonia in August 2005. MATA was formed in response to artisan entrepreneurs' need for continued assistance in the areas of capacity-building and advocacy as they overcome structural constraints in the craft sector in Macedonia. MATA's work builds on the momentum of the ATA project and seeks to establish sustainable results in the handmade industry.

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